



2008 United States Animal Health Report Highlights: Documenting a Dynamic Agricultural Landscape



Message from Dr. Clifford

As U.S. agriculture evolves, the global marketplace becomes increasingly competitive, and the



intersections of animal and public health become more and more evident, the term “team effort” becomes less of a catch phrase and more of an imperative every day.

We must work together to maintain, ensure, and protect animal and human health, and recognize that an integral part of moving forward effectively is taking stock of the recent past.

On that note, we are pleased this year to have the opportunity to bring U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) members this pamphlet updating you on issues important to all stakeholders in U.S. livestock health and announcing APHIS’ upcoming publication of the *2008 United States Animal Health Report*. For a fifth year, stakeholders can look to this report for a cohesive, compact

record of the Nation’s animal health. The report serves as an invaluable resource highlighting the health status and number of U.S. livestock, the APHIS programs developed to protect their health and marketability, and the latest technological advances that affect veterinary medicine and the way animal disease events are managed.

With our common goal of keeping U.S. livestock, poultry, and aquaculture populations healthy, APHIS is proud to be a part of your team, reflecting on the state of U.S. agriculture and developing strategies to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

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Report Overview

The *2008 United States Animal Health Report* details the programs, events, and initiatives that would not be possible without the support of USAHA. Highlights include APHIS and collaborators' efforts aimed at maintaining healthy livestock, poultry, and aquaculture populations, as well as reviews of key epidemiological developments in 2008. And as we are reminded time and again that disease doesn't abide by geopolitical boundaries, the report documents APHIS' increasingly important international collaborations and activities.

The report also provides an overview of APHIS' animal health surveillance activities and emergency planning, preparedness, and monitoring efforts. And last but not least, the report chronicles one of our most important areas of progress in 2008—outlining our vision for the future of APHIS' Veterinary Services' (VS) program and summarizing, in "VS 2015," some of the programs and activities we've already undertaken to make that vision happen. The VS 2015 vision projects a broad view of the organization we anticipate becoming by 2015 and is shaped by many forces, not the least of which is our collaboration with our partners.

2008 Animal Health Highlights and Accomplishments

VS 2015—VS 2015 is a strategic vision developed to guide USDA in making changes that will better position it to meet animal health needs. The VS 2015 vision outlines some of the ways the animal agriculture industry is changing—often in ways demanding different types of government services—and how USDA's programs must adapt to keep pace with those changes. The effective control or near eradication of many diseases in the United States emphasizes the need for new surveillance and monitoring strategies for USDA programs.

As part of the VS 2015 vision, APHIS has identified three essential areas of focus for the future: (1) disease prevention, preparedness, detection, and early response; (2) expanded interstate and international certification services; and (3) the public health-animal health interface.

Animal Health Events—As part of its role in preventing, controlling, and eliminating animal diseases, APHIS practices veterinary medicine and epidemiology on a broad scale. The agency's mission involves responding to animal health events of statewide, regional, national, and international importance.





Of 290 foreign animal disease (FAD) investigations conducted in 2008, nine resulted in confirmed FAD findings, four of them contagious equine metritis (CEM). The effects and potential spread of all were minimized thanks to early identification and quick response.

As readers of this year's report will see, from the CEM outbreak to that of bovine tuberculosis—a disease that has historically impacted the United States—2008 marked a year when USDA and its State partners demonstrated the effectiveness of joint response efforts in identifying, investigating, and containing animal health events.

Emergency Planning/Preparedness—As the lead Federal agency in preventing and responding to animal disease-related national emergencies, APHIS and its National Center for Animal Health Emergency Management (NCAHEM) continued extensive emergency planning and preparedness efforts in 2008. The Animal Health Report details some of these, including National Veterinary Stockpile deployment drills; stakeholder exercises for foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), and radiologic leaks; FMD simulation exercises; and revisions of FMD and HPAI national response plans and objectives to ensure that officials' responsibilities and actions will be clearly outlined.

In partnership with U.S. egg industry representatives and State animal health officials, APHIS also undertook an important HPAI-related continuity-of-business preparedness and response planning initiative in 2008. As part of the initiative, APHIS and its partners developed protocols to quickly determine what eggs and egg products could be safely moved out of HPAI quarantine zones and into market channels in the event of an outbreak. The initiative will serve as a model for similar biosecurity plans for other commodities.

Surveillance and Diagnostics

In keeping with its key tenets of collaboration, coordination with partners, and flexibility to adapt to disease environment changes, the National Animal Health Surveillance System



(NAHSS) made significant strides in 2008, including development of a swine influenza virus (SIV) surveillance pilot. The pilot was a collaborative effort between APHIS, industry, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

APHIS' involvement in developing a national biosurveillance program, through participation in the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 21, marked another significant collaborative effort in 2008.

Through NAHSS' network of Federal, State, and industry partners, APHIS also continued moving in 2008 to integrate existing animal health monitoring programs and surveillance activities into a national, comprehensive, and coordinated system. NAHSS planning activities focused on evaluating existing surveillance, standardizing surveillance processes, and continuing development of comprehensive surveillance systems for high impact diseases such as avian influenza, FMD, and swine diseases. Joint efforts with wildlife agencies addressed several diseases, including bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis, tightened the focus on the wildlife-livestock interface, and highlighted the importance of joint efforts in controlling diseases that impact both wildlife and livestock.

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network, an important part of the NAHSS, is designed to coordinate and link the testing and referencing capabilities of the Federal veterinary diagnostic

laboratories with the facilities, expertise, and support of State and university laboratories. Among 2008 NAHLN highlights, laboratories conducted numerous scenario testing exercises to assess their outbreak response plans. Personnel also collaborated with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) to establish a process to review laboratories and ensure they are consistent with standards of the AAVLD, OIE, and International Organization for Standardization. Laboratories also collaborated with the National Veterinary Stockpile to identify resource needs to support diagnostic testing during emergency response.

Monitoring—Independent of the normal regulatory and associated surveillance activities, National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) studies provide a statistically sound measure of animal production and health, and most contain a detailed description of vaccination practices in various species. The 2008 Animal Health Report outlines plans for Goat 2009, NAHMS' first study of the U.S. goat industry. With 21 of the major goat-producing States participating, this first look at goat management will obtain baseline information about the U.S. goat population with a focus on health and management practices. The study is being implemented in 2009.

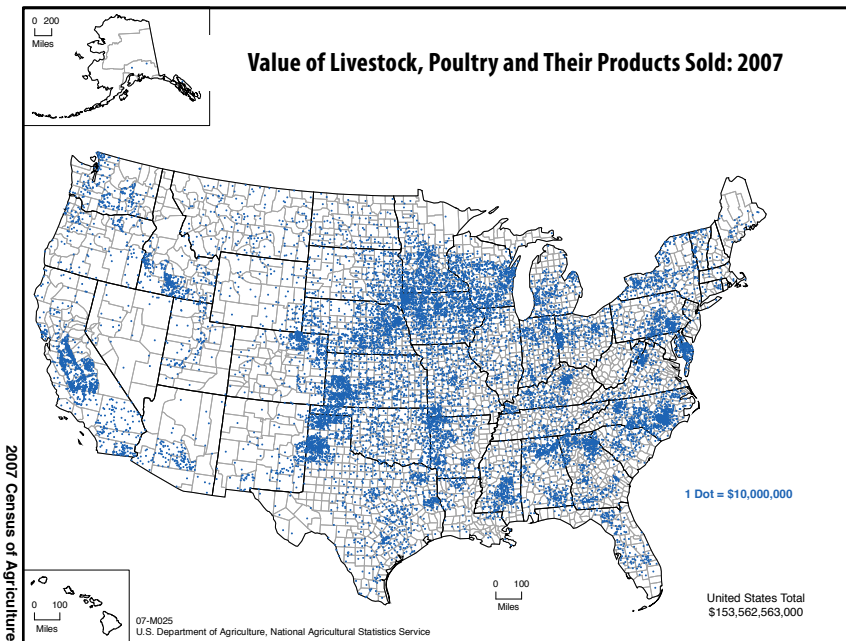
The AHR also features findings of Beef 2007–08. In addition to continuing previous beef studies' characterization of health and health manage-



ment on cow-calf operations, Beef 2007–08 characterizes control strategies for bovine viral diarrhea virus on operations and collects data on management practices to support product quality assurance efforts. Collection of data for the Beef 2007–08 study occurred in 2008. Results will continue to be reported throughout 2009 at <http://nahms.aphis.usda.gov>. Changes in health and health management practices from the previous beef study, conducted 10 years earlier, will be identified.

American Agriculture, By the Numbers

Every 5 years, USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts a new Census of Agriculture. The *2008 United States Animal Health Report* includes numbers from the 2007 (the most recent) Census of Agriculture and provides an informative summary of the U.S. livestock, poultry, and aquaculture industries.



Did You Know?

- Of the Nation's 2.2 million farms, about 1 million have cattle and about 0.6 million have horses and ponies.
- Roughly equivalent numbers of farms have milk cows, cattle on feed, hogs, and sheep (67,000; 82,170; 73,150; and 82,330; respectively).
- There are about twice the number of operations with goats than with sheep.
- The value of production for cattle, milk from milk cows, and poultry are all roughly equivalent (\$35 to 36 billion).
- The value of production for livestock and poultry commodities is now less than one-half the value of all crop and livestock products.

APHIS Launches New Animal Health Web Site

This month, APHIS is launching a new Web site dedicated solely to the status of animal health in the United States. The site is easy to navigate and offers access to a wealth of resources in one place, including:

- Downloadable copies of the most current NASS Census maps,
- An online version of the *2008 United States Animal Health Report* (available mid-November 2009), and
- A PDF archive of past years' Animal Health Reports.

You can view the site at

<http://USanimalhealth.aphis.usda.gov>.

Please check it out and let us know what you think. Our goal is for the site to become a "one-stop shop" for U.S. animal health-related news and information. So if there are specific resources you'd like to see on the site, we'd love to hear your ideas.

Coming Soon

Hard copies of the *2008 United States Animal Health Report* will be available in late December 2009. Pre-orders are now being accepted. To place an order, e-mail your request to **NAHMS@aphis.usda.gov**.

- Links to the most recent news on "hot issues" like H1N1 Influenza and CEM,
- Up-to-date information on evolving animal health issues, such as VS 2015,



The background of the entire page is a blue-tinted photograph. It depicts a vast landscape with a range of mountains in the distance. In the lower-left foreground, there is a large, rustic barn with a gambrel roof. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The overall tone is professional and serene.

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